



POSTAL NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 17, 2003

Contact: Media Relations
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Release No. 086
www.usps.com

AIR SYSTEM WILL PROTECT POSTAL EMPLOYEES, MAIL

WASHINGTON, DC — Deployment of new equipment designed to improve the overall health and safety of postal employees – and to reduce their exposure to biological threats in the mail – begins next year with the installation of new Ventilation and Filtration Systems (VFS) in mail processing and distribution centers across the country.

Specifically designed to capture and contain potentially hazardous airborne particulates which might be released during in-bound mail processing operations, VFS equipment will be installed above operations performed by Advanced Facer Canceled Systems (AFCS) – the equipment that cancels stamped letter mail – and also above each facility's network of machines that handles and prepares loose mail for cancellation.

During mail processing, VFS equipment will automatically and continuously vacuum air from the machinery through a series of filters that capture and contain at least 99.97 percent of all dust and potential contaminants. The system – which uses conventional filters and ultra-High Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) filters – has undergone extensive testing by the National Institute of Safety and Health (NIOSH).

According to Tom Day, Postal Service Vice President of Engineering, VFS represents the second phase of a multi-tiered response to events resulting from the anthrax attacks in the fall of 2001.

The first phase – nationwide deployment of Biohazard Detection Systems (BDS) – begins in March 2004 and marks the Postal Service's initial step in establishing non-invasive methods to provide for the detection and containment of aerosolized biohazards in all mail processing and distribution centers.

“Our Ventilation and Filtration Systems work in concert with the BDS to provide an integrated safety network that meets the Postal Service’s goals of improving the overall safety of our employees, the safety of the mail, and the safety of the American public,” said Day.

VFS equipment – supplied under contracts awarded to Siemens Dematic Postal Automation LP of Arlington, TX, and AccuSort Systems Inc. of Hatfield, PA – will be installed nationwide in more than 280 mail processing and distribution centers.

The Siemens Dematic contract, valued at \$89.9 million, calls for system equipment to be installed on all 1,065 AFCS machines located in mail processing centers across the country. The AccuSort Systems contract, valued at \$35 million, calls for VFS equipment to be installed over the area in each mail processing center where loose mail preparation machines operate. Terms of the contracts call for installations to begin in the spring of 2004.

Since 1775, the U.S. Postal Service has connected friends, families, neighbors and businesses by mail. It is an independent federal agency that makes deliveries to about 140 million addresses every day and is the only service provider to deliver to every address in the nation. The Postal Service receives no taxpayer dollars for routine operations, but derives its operating revenues solely from the sale of postage, products and services. With annual revenues of more than \$66 billion, it is the world's leading provider of mail and delivery services, offering some of the most affordable postage rates in the world. The U.S. Postal Service delivers more than 43 percent of the world's mail volume -- some 203 billion letters, advertisements, periodicals and packages a year -- and serves seven million customers each day at its 38,000 retail locations nationwide.